

ATTACHMENT 1

OLD TOWN AREA PARKING STUDY  
WORK GROUP

Final Report and Recommendations

October 2010

Prepared by:

*Department of Transportation & Environmental Services*

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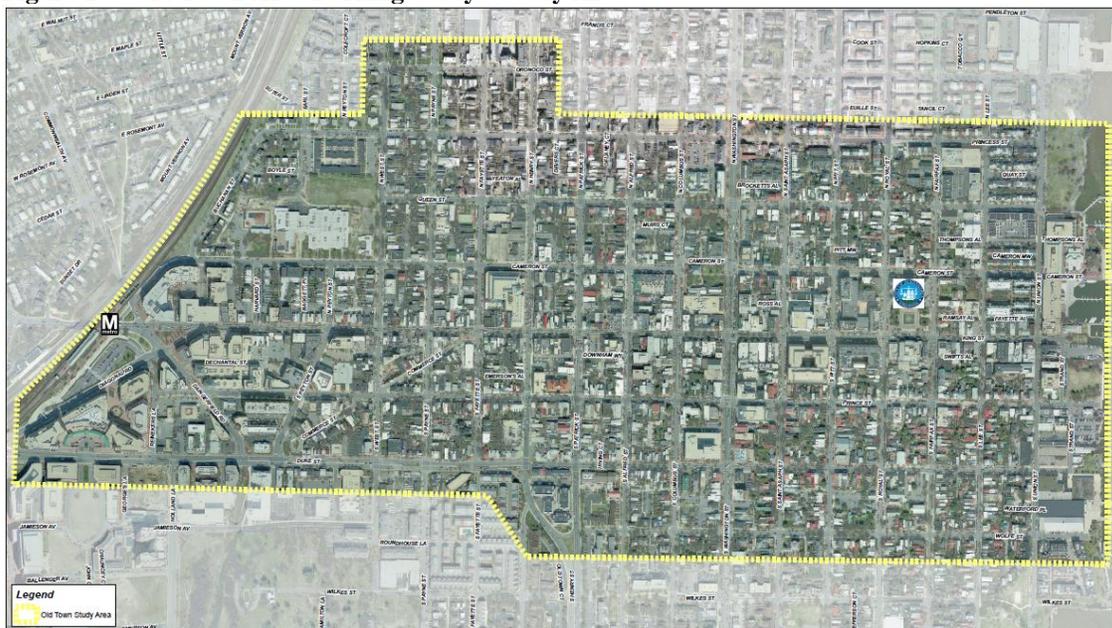
## INTRODUCTION

Old Town Alexandria is a vibrant destination for visitors, businesses, and residents. As such, parking in the Old Town area in the City of Alexandria has always been in high demand. With over 140,000 residents within the City boundaries, 3.3 million visitors a year, and a multitude of shops, restaurants, and historical destinations, Alexandria is a major local and regional destination. As with all successful destinations, parking supply is a critical resource and its proper management is vital. In 2009, the Alexandria City Council created a staff position to address the parking pressures and managing the multiple issues. City Council also approved funding to commission a study of parking utilization, occupancy rates, and parking issues in the Old Town area and to develop recommendations to guide the City in managing parking supply and demand.

### *The Old Town Area Parking Study*

The Old Town Area Parking Study was completed in February of 2010. The study area consisted of approximately 85 city blocks, generally extending along King Street from the Potomac River to the King Street Metro station and including three blocks to the north and south of King Street as shown in Figure 1 below. The study looked at availability of parking on-street, in off-street public parking garages, in off-street surface parking lots, and in off-street private parking garages. In this area, there exist more than 8,300 publicly accessible parking spaces. A little over half of these spaces are located on-street, and the remaining spaces are located in off-street facilities, such as parking garages or lots. The study of the occupancy of these spaces showed that in general, the Old Town area does not have a parking supply problem, but there are issues with the proximity, rate, availability of desired spaces and wayfinding.

**Figure 1 – Old Town Area Parking Study: Study Area**



Utilization of the parking spaces was studied during peak time periods on weekdays, Fridays, and Saturdays as shown in Figure 2. The study showed that overall parking utilization in the Old Town area peaked at 75% capacity, and the highest overall occupancy was on Friday afternoon. On-street parking was heavily utilized at all times. Overall utilization of the on-street spaces during the study periods averaged 71%, but on-street spaces east of Patrick Street showed a much higher occupancy rate than those spaces west of Patrick Street. Off-street spaces peaked at different times, seemingly dependant on the location, the rate, and the type of users served. Off-street facilities that served larger office buildings were heavily utilized during the weekday hours, whereas those serving visitors showed more usage in the evenings, especially when on-street spaces in the immediate vicinity of the facility were full.

**Figure 2 – Old Town Area Parking Study Periods and Utilization**

Day of Week of Study	Time of Day of Study	Occupancy of Parking Spaces
Weekday	12:00 pm – 2:00 pm	75%
Weekday	6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	50%
Friday	12:00 pm – 2:00 pm	75%
Friday	6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	58%
Saturday	11:00 am – 1:00 pm	55%
Saturday	7:00 pm – 9:00 pm	62%

The Old Town Area Parking Study concluded with recommendations to improve parking management throughout the Old Town area. Proper management would enable the City to fully utilize the capacity that is currently available throughout the area. The primary recommendations from the Old Town Area Parking Study are:

- Develop a task force of major stakeholders to help develop consensus on parking management strategies.
- Replace coin-operated single-space meters on King Street with higher-tech, multi-space meters, which both allow for flexible parking spacing and flexibility for the city to modify its rates.
- Increasing parking rates increases turn-over and decreases long-term parking, meaning more cars can use the spaces throughout the day. Create a public education process to communicate that all must pay for parking.
- Decrease on-street meter parking duration in locations where the adjacent land use may benefit from higher turnover, increasing the likelihood of parking turnover.
- Decrease the allowed parking time in residential permit areas to encourage long-term parkers to park in Old Town by other modes or facilities.
- Extend evening on-street parking meter hours; free on-street parking is more attractive than paying for parking elsewhere, thus will encourage increased use of off-street parking.

- Encourage parking garage owners and operators to add pay-by-foot meters so the garage can extend hours and increase their appeal without need for attendants.
- Implement a wayfinding program to show publicly-accessible parking facilities, increasing off-street parking utilization.
- Evaluate the value and feasibility of providing real-time parking information to parkers.
- Reduce parking demand by improving the attractiveness of alternates to cars. Make the King Street trolley and Metro more appealing. Work with employers to offer mass-transit subsidies.
- Identify and work with owners and operators of key private parking facilities that can relieve pressure on existing public facilities.

## **OLD TOWN AREA PARKING STUDY WORK GROUP**

### ***Establishment and Members***

The first recommendation in the parking study was to develop a work group to include major stakeholders in the area to help develop consensus on parking management strategies. After a work session on the Old Town Area Parking Study and its recommendations, City Council asked that a Work Group be appointed by the City Manager to assess some of the recommendations set forth in the study and develop recommendations for implementation of parking management measures based on the parking study. City Council specified topics to be addressed during the Work Group sessions, including time restrictions on parking meters, adding meters in currently unmetered locations, increasing the use of parking garages, and a proposed policy to require payment of meter fees by vehicles displaying handicapped license plates or placards, also known as “All May Park, All Must Pay.”

The appointed Work Group represented stakeholder associations and organizations that would be affected by changes to parking management in the Old Town area. The Work Group member list and the stakeholder group that each member represented included:

1. Rob Kaufman, Real Estate Developer - PMA Properties
2. Tobias Arff, Hotels - Hotel Monaco
3. Jody Manor, Restaurants - Bittersweet/Snack Shak Owner
4. Marsha Wright, Retailer - Old Town Pendleton Shop
5. Mollie Danforth, Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities
6. Tara G. Zimmick-Calico, Old Town Business & Professional Association
7. Steve Tees, Old Town Business & Professional Association
8. Mark Abramson, Leadership Inc., Citizen Representative
9. John Hassett, U.S. Patent & Trademark Office
10. Mark S. Feldheim, Citizen Representative
11. Andrew Blair, Parking Garage Owner/Operator - Colonial Parking
12. Bert Ely, Old Town Civic Association
13. John Gosling, Old Town Civic Association
14. Heidi Ford, West Old Town Citizens Association

15. Charlotte Hall, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce
16. Barbara Ross, P&Z, City Staff
17. Abi Lerner, T&ES, Chair, City Staff

The Upper King Street Neighborhood Association was also invited to join the Work Group, but representation in the group was declined by the association.

In addition to the members of the public, other City Departments also contributed to the Work Group efforts. Of note, staff with the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Police Department attended the meetings and provided information and expertise on the various topics of discussion.

### ***Purpose And Goals***

The purpose of the Old Town Area Parking Study (OTAPS) Work Group was to improve parking management in the Old Town area through implementation of recommendations set forth in the Old Town Area Parking Study. At the first meeting in June 2010, two goals were stated for the group to achieve.

1. To discuss the selected recommendations from the parking study.
2. To establish a plan for implementation of those selected recommendations.

The selected recommendations that the group was directed to address were divided into two groups: short-term and long-term. Short-term recommendations could be implemented in six to twelve months and included the use of variable meter parking durations, extension of on-street parking meter hours, addition of meters in currently unmetered locations in the Old Town area, and the implementation of the “All May Park, All Must Pay” policy. Long-term recommendations need a year or more to implement and included parking time restrictions in residential permit areas and increased use of parking garages and lots.

The Work Group met six times between June and August of 2010 to discuss the assigned topics. Through an aggressive meeting schedule during the summer months, the Work Group accomplished both of the goals that were established at the onset of the sessions. The group concluded on August 31, 2010 with recommendations for implementation of the selected study recommendations.

## **TOPIC DISCUSSIONS**

### ***Meters in Commercial Areas***

Currently, there are 1,039 metered parking spaces within the Old Town area. Each of the spaces is managed by a single-space meter, which currently can accept only quarters and dimes for the purchase of time in a parking space. All of the meters have a two hour time limit, with the Code of Alexandria prohibiting the purchase of extended time at the same meter. The metered blocks include almost the entire lengths of King Street and Washington Street within the study area and one to two blocks of the intersecting side

streets of both roadways, as shown in Figure 3. The metered blocks generally coincide with, but do not cover, the entire commercial area of Old Town. As part of the Work Group meetings, discussions concerning meters in commercial areas covered use of multispace meters, introduction of variable parking rates in the Old Town area, conversion of some of the two hour meters to meters with shorter time limits, extension of the meter operational hours, installation of meters in currently unmetered blocks, and implementation of pay-by-phone technology.

**Figure 3 – Metered Parking Spaces in the Old Town area (designated in blue)**



## **Multispace Meters**

Recently, major cities and smaller jurisdictions have been replacing single-space meters with multispace meters. Multispace meters offer the opportunity to manage eight to ten parking spaces with a single metering kiosk. This eliminates the bulk of hardware that is required by single-space meters and provides a friendlier and less cluttered environment on sidewalks and in other pedestrian areas that flank parking spaces. By using one multispace meter instead of multiple single-space meters, jurisdictions have less equipment to maintain. Multispace meters tend to jam less frequently, and are manufactured to withstand vandals' attempt to jam coin slots or steal money contained within. Because the currency holding area in each multispace meter is equivalent to up to fifteen times that of a single-space meter, less staff collection time is needed. An additional benefit is the ability to adjust parking rates and operational hours quickly and easily for expected and unexpected events. Multispace meters can accept various forms of payment, including credit cards, debit cards, smart cards, and currency, and can also integrate with pay-by-phone technology (discussed in a future section), depending on a jurisdiction's preferences. This ability to accept multiple forms of payment offers convenience to the user and the choice of payment options improves the general parking experience.

There are also some drawbacks to multispace meters. Multispace meters are costlier to purchase and install than single-space meters, with the cost per space almost double that of the standard single-space meter. However, a comparison of the maintenance and operational needs of both types of meters shows that total costs during the lifetime of the meters are comparable. If a malfunction were to occur, it would affect a greater number of spaces. The option would exist to use an adjacent meter, however, and the multispace meter would communicate with the operational staff to alert them that maintenance is needed. This eliminates the frustration and confusion of a single-space meter user, who currently has no option for alternate payment, must report the meter as broken if they have the means necessary to do so, and must decide whether to take the chance of parking at an unpaid meter. Multispace meters also present an aesthetic impact on a location, but the overall impact can be less than the impact of the multiple single-space meters necessary to manage the same area. A final disadvantage is the location of the meter proximate to each parking space. Because a multispace meter manages a greater number of parking spaces, several of those spaces would be located further from the meter rather than directly adjacent to the space, such as the case with single-space meters. Multispace meters generally cover approximately 150-200 feet of parking space, which means that the furthest space would be located about 100 feet, or five car lengths, from the meter. This presents difficulties for those that are mobility impaired if those users park in the spaces located farthest from the meter.

Two types of multispace meters are available for the management of parking spaces. First is the pay-and-display type, which requires the user to pay the meter fee, take the printed receipt, and return to the car to place the receipt in the vehicle for enforcement purposes. The second option is the pay-by-space type, in which parkers indicate their specific parking space when paying the meter fee. The meter then keeps track of which spaces are paid for enforcement purposes. Each of the types of multispace meters has advantages over the other, as shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4 - Comparison of Types of Multispace Meters**

<b>Pay and Display (Receipt in Window)</b>	<b>Pay by Space (Pay at Meter)</b>
Provides more parking - Allows self-spacing	Limited spaces - Park in set spaces
Requires return trip to car	Ability to pay and go
Less maintenance needs - No painted lines, numbers	Needs maintenance: painted lines, numbered spaces
Maximizes revenue - No time “piggybacking”	Can increase revenue - Reduces “piggybacking”

Requires on-foot PEOs - Increases enforcement time	Can be monitored remotely for enforcement
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**Pay-and-display meters** have the greatest benefit in their ability to provide more parking spaces. Since spaces are not marked, drivers can park their vehicle in any adequate length of available parking space, which has been shown to result in one to two additional vehicles per block to be parked when compared to predetermined and marked parking spaces. Marked parking spaces must be measured to accommodate large vehicles, and often, smaller vehicles do not fully utilize the allowed space, resulting in a loss of prime parking area. Because spaces do not need to be delineated or identified by location, maintenance needs for pavement markings or space indicators are minimal. The pay-and-display option also maximizes revenue, by eliminating the possibility of “piggybacking” on other parkers’ time. Once a user has moved his vehicle, his time at the space is effectively zeroed out, and any new user must pay for his full time in the space. The issuance of the meter receipt to show expiration time also gives the City the ability to allow “mobile parking time”, in which the user can use the purchased parking time in multiple spaces throughout the area. This can be beneficial to those with mobility issues. A negative to the pay-and-display type of multispace meters is the requirement of a return trip to the parked vehicle for placement of the receipt, which can present problems for those with mobility impairments.

Enforcement of the pay-and-display meters require enforcement officers to patrol on-foot to view the receipts, which cannot be accomplished from within an enforcement vehicle. This can increase the time necessary for parking enforcement when compared to the ease of identification of an expired single-space meter.

**Pay-by-space multispace meters** require each parking space to be delineated and marked and uniquely identified. The meter requires the user to enter the space identifier to purchase time for that space. The meter then keeps track of which spaces have been paid, and enforcement officers can check the space occupancy through the meter. This has the ability to be done remotely as well, which can help to focus an enforcement officer’s time on areas with the greatest enforcement needs. This option also eliminates the need for the user to make a return trip to the parked vehicle, as no receipt is necessary once the space has been paid for at the meter. The pay-by-space option requires maintenance of the pavement markings and unique identifiers for the spaces. In many areas of the country, such as in the City of Alexandria, leaves and snow can cover markings on curbs or flush mounted identifiers, so vertical identifiers for each space may be required. This eliminates the advantage of multispace meters to remove hardware from the pedestrian area, but instead requires additional hardware to be reintroduced to the area. These identifiers and space delineators also require constant maintenance for this meter system to be effective and user friendly. Although pay-by-space meters can increase revenue, the amount of leftover time on a meter can also be checked and used by a subsequent parker, allowing piggybacking of meter time.

### **Multispace Meters –Group Discussion**

Staff presented the OTAPS Work Group with recommendations pertaining to multispace meters based on the benefits and disadvantages as described above. First, staff recommended installation of multispace pay-and-display meters in the Old Town area along King Street and in side street locations with high demand. This is consistent with the recommendation presented in the parking study. Also, staff recommended that the City does not install any new single-space meters in the future, except in designated disabled spaces.

The Work Group agreed with both of these recommendations, including the specification of pay-and-display type of multispace meters, and selected them as part of its final recommendations on the topic. The group was also asked to provide direction on prioritization of installation of multispace meters. Placing this new type of meter in currently unmetered locations would help to offset the cost of the purchase and installation. However, the group felt strongly that multispace meters should first be installed in locations that currently have single-space meters. The group agreed that the existing single-space meters that accept only quarters and dimes in conjunction with a rate increase to \$1.75 per hour that took effect on July 1, 2010 has placed an unintended hardship on businesses and meter users. To assist in remedying these issues, the group prioritized replacement of single-space meters over metering new locations.

### **Multispace Meters – Group Recommendations**

- **Install multispace pay-and-display meters for all new meter installations**
- **Replace existing single-space meters with multispace meters**

### **Variable Parking Rates**

Variable parking rates give a jurisdiction the ability to charge higher or lower rates dependant on certain factors, such as day, time, or utilization. Jurisdictions use variable parking rates, which includes congestion pricing (parking rates that increase as spaces reach full occupancy and decrease as occupancy lowers), to discourage driving and encourage alternate transportation modes during the most congested periods. Normally, rates increase on peak hours or days, during special events, or in areas with high occupancy rates. This encourages a higher turnover of the parking meters during these peak times or in these high demand areas. Nearby, Washington D.C. uses variable parking rates to increase parking rates near the stadiums during events. Variable rates would only be possible with the use of meters with wireless communications, which would enable rates to be change at these determined times. The City does not currently have this capability in the Old Town area.

### **Variable Parking Rates – Group Discussion**

The Old Town Area Parking Study recommended development of a system-wide parking rate structure that encourages parkers to use appropriate parking facilities to meet short- and long-term needs. Variable parking rates could be included as part of this structure. The City of Alexandria could use variable rates to manage metered spaces during peak

hours, such as Friday and Saturday evenings, or during scheduled events such as parades or festivals. Although variable rates could not be implemented until multispace meters are installed or the current meters are upgraded to include wireless communications, the discussion was based on the assumption that this technology would be implemented. Even with this assumption, staff recommended against implementing variable parking rates at this time. It is staff's opinion that the metered area of Old Town is not large enough to fully benefit from variable parking rates, and instead, the variable pricing may be confusing to visitors to the City at this time.

The Work Group agreed with the staff recommendation, and although the group fully supports implementation of multispace meters, which would allow introduction of variable pricing, it was agreed that variable pricing would be not be ideal at this time. However, as the City continues to develop and more visitors are attracted to the destinations in the Old Town area, such as with the proposed Waterfront Concept Plan, variable pricing could be used to manage additional parking demands at that time.

#### **Variable Parking Rates – Group Recommendation**

- **Do not implement variable parking rates at this time**

#### **Meter Time Limits**

The time limit of two hours for the meters in the Old Town area encourages turnover in this high demand and highly utilized parking area. However, there are businesses that may benefit from an even higher turnover rate and shorter allowable meter time limit. These businesses include coffee shops, banks, drugstores, post offices, and any other business in which customers tend to spend a short amount of time. Most of the City's neighboring jurisdictions, including Arlington, Georgetown, Bethesda, and Annapolis, offer differing time limits at specific meters. In most of these areas, the shorter-term meters are placed in areas where quick turnover is needed or desired, such as the types of places listed above. Longer-term meters are located further from the more popular destinations, and in some jurisdictions, eight to twelve hour meters are offered for commuters or day-long guests to the area where parking has been historically heavily utilized by long-term parkers. Where short- and long-term meters are differentiated by time allowances, the meter pricing can also differ, thereby encouraging users to park at the appropriate meter for their use and refrain from parking in a shorter-term area and "feeding" the meter.

#### **Meter Time Limits – Group Discussion**

The parking study recommended decreasing on-street meter parking duration in locations where the adjacent land use may benefit from higher turnover to increase the likelihood of parking turnover. Based on the type of meter usage and the benefits of meters with shorter time limits, staff recommended decreasing on-street meter parking duration, such as implementing 30- or 60-minute limits, in locations where high turnover is desired.

The Work Group discussed the benefits of meters with shorter time limits. Discussions covered appropriate placement of these shorter-term meters and what appropriate time limits would be most beneficial to users. Although, these short-term meters would most benefit the types of businesses listed above, there was concern that the land uses were not permanent enough to establish specific types of meters based on their usage. Also, many types of businesses attract both longer-term customers as well as shorter-term customers, and exclusion or inclusion of locations for placement of short-term meters may be controversial within the business community. There was also a concern of confusion to users; with the large number of visitors to the City, parkers may not be aware of where and why short-term meters exist, which could cause confusion and frustration to parkers upon securing a parking space. To aid in proper usage, the group discussed the necessity for additional signage to properly mark short-term meters, which would detract from the pedestrian environment. This would be especially detracting and confusing if short-term spaces were to be located among spaces managed by multispace meters.

Discussions also centered on which time limits should be included with conversion of the to a shorter restricted time duration. Some group members felt that 30 minutes was too restrictive, as even quick turnaround businesses can require more than 30 minutes. Others felt that a 60 minute limit would encourage parkers to simply feed the meter when other parking could not be found, or give parkers a sense of security in allowing a one hour time limit, such as for lunch or shopping, when a two hour limit may be more reasonable.

There was consensus among the Work Group that locations and time limits should be kept consistent throughout the Old Town area in order to minimize confusion among users. Because of this, the group listed several options in their recommendation alternatives, which were: place one or two 30 minute metered spaces per block throughout the metered area; place one or two one-hour metered spaces per block throughout the metered area; and place one hour metered spaces on King Street and two hour metered spaces on side streets.

Because of the recommendation to replace single-space meters with multispace meters, the Work Group ultimately decided not to include any shorter-term meters in the final recommendations. The group felt that placement of shorter-term meters among two hour meters in a location managed by multispace meters would be too confusing and require too much signage to be installed. The ability to use pay-and-display receipts for mobile parking time (as described in the multispace meter section) would also confuse users. If certain multispace meters were limited to issuing 30- or 60-minute receipts, parkers would not be able to use those machines in the case of nearby meter malfunction. Also, the goal of the overall parking management plan is to always have one or two open parking spaces per block. This would eliminate the need to offer quicker turnaround spaces, especially if the space were not necessarily located adjacent to the appropriate land use. The group's final recommendation was to keep the metered area at a two hour maximum time restriction.

**Meter Time Limits – Group Recommendation**

- **Do not offer shorter time limits on any meters**

**Extension of Meter Operational Hours**

Meter operational hours are normally dependant on the times in which the parking spaces are in demand. This can be determined through occupancy studies of the area in question. The Old Town Area Parking Study showed that the metered spaces are in demand not only during the operational hours, but also during some non-operational times, such as Friday and Saturday nights. At these peak hours when the meters are not operational, parkers may leave their vehicles parked indefinitely at no cost until the meters are operational again the following day.

Extending the operational hours of the meters would encourage turnover in the metered areas, which is generally representative of the most convenient parking spaces in the Old Town area. Extended hours would also encourage the use of off-street parking facilities for visitors who plan to stay in the area for longer than two hours in the evenings and reduce the use of these valuable parking spaces as long-term parking by business owners and employees. This makes those optimal spaces available for customers and short-term visitors. Extending the evening operational hours and encouraging turnover at the premium spaces also reduces the act of “cruising”, which occurs when drivers circle the block or the area in hopes of finding prime parking. This tends to occur more frequently when the prime spaces are also free, as is the case in Old Town. Cruising adds to congestion in the streets, frustration in drivers, and environmental issues such as air quality and increased fuel consumption.

Similar local jurisdictions in the vicinity have varied meter operational hours, as shown in Figure 5. Arlington’s meters operate from 8:00 am through 6:00 pm Monday through Saturday. Washington, D.C.’s meter hours depend on location of the meters, with certain prime areas have meter hours of 7:00 am through 10:00 pm Monday through Saturday such as in Georgetown. Bethesda’s meter hours are 9:00 am through 10:00 pm Monday through Saturday, and Annapolis’ meters operate from 10:00 am through 7:30 pm every day of the week, including Sundays and holidays. The City of Alexandria has varying times of meter operations within the Old Town area, with meter management beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 5:00 pm, 6:00 pm, or 7:00 pm, depending on the location of the meter.

**Figure 5 – Jurisdictional Meter Operational Times**

Locality	Meter Operational Hours	Meter Operational Days
Alexandria	8:00 am – 5:00, 6:00, 7:00 pm	Monday – Saturday (except holidays)
Arlington	8:00 am – 6:00 pm	Monday – Saturday (except holidays)
Georgetown	7:00 am – 10:00 pm	Monday – Saturday (except holidays)
Bethesda	9:00 am – 10:00 pm	Monday – Saturday (except holidays)

Annapolis	10:00 am – 7:30 pm	Monday – Sunday (including holidays)
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**Extension of Meter Operational Hours – Group Discussion**

The Old Town Area Parking Study recommended the extension of on-street parking meter hours into the evenings, as the use of free on-street parking in the evenings when meters are no longer in operation is more attractive to drivers than paying for parking elsewhere. Staff agreed with this recommendation, and presented a recommendation to extend meter hours until 10:00 pm, which is concurrent with the hours in Georgetown and Bethesda.

The Work Group agreed that meter hours should be extended until 10:00 pm and many members felt that including operational hours on Sundays and holidays should also be considered. Members of the Work Group also agreed the current operational hours should be consistent throughout the area.

East of Washington Street, where parking is highly utilized, the meters operate until 7:00 pm. This allows people to park at anytime from 5:00 pm on, pay the appropriate meter fees until 7:00 pm, and not move the car for the rest of the evening. On-street parking in this area offers the most convenient parking location and should therefore provide a higher turnover rate so that shorter-term parkers can use those spaces throughout the evening. Instead, the City has effectively lost those spots after 5:00 pm under the current meter hours. Owners of the businesses that still depend on customers after 5:00 pm will not benefit from those spaces and the turnover they would encourage. As shown in the parking study, there is an increased demand for parking in the Old Town area between 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and the on-street spaces are intended to supply those needs. Therefore, the group recommended that the hours be extended until 10:00 pm to encourage turnover until the peak demand has been reached at 8:00 pm. At that time, parkers would be able to locate an on-street space and pay \$3.50 under the current rates as of October 2010 to park for the rest of the evening.

Although the occupancy along the middle and upper sections of King Street is slightly lower on weekday evenings than the occupancy in the lower section, the study showed full occupancy in these areas on Friday and Saturday evenings. This is most likely due to the availability of free unlimited parking during these peak periods. The group felt that these areas would also benefit from meter management consistent with the rest of the Old Town area. The consistency of operational hours would reduce confusion for users throughout Old Town.

**Extension of Meter Operational Hours – Group Recommendation**

- **Extend operational hours of meters until 10:00 pm on existing operational days**

### **Increasing the Metered Area in the Core Commercial District**

Currently, metered parking spaces are located in the core commercial district of Old Town, which includes the length of King Street from the Potomac River to the King Street Metro Station and about a block of each intersecting street to the north and south of King Street. However, several blocks in this core commercial area remain unmetered. In many cases, however, the parking is managed by two hour time restrictions. Metering commercial blocks encourages turnover and discourages long-term parking. This increases the number of spaces available for customers and clients of businesses, and for visitors to the Old Town area. Metered parking also improves the utilization of off-street parking facilities, such as parking garages and lots, for users needing longer than two hour allotment that the meters allow. Driver behavior studies show that parkers are more willing to take the chance of leaving their vehicle for an extended period of time in a time restricted area rather than in a metered area. This explains why adding meters in unmetered locations discourages the use of the spaces by business owners and employees, and other long-term parkers. Adding meters continues to reduce the act of “cruising” by eliminating free parking in the highest demand areas and directing drivers to parking lots. On-street parking spaces in commercial areas should be geared towards use by short-term (two hours or less) visitors to the commercial establishments.

### **Increasing the Metered Area in the Core Commercial District – Group Discussion**

The Old Town Area Parking Study recommended that meters be added in the currently unmetered areas on King Street and in side street locations with high demand. The staff recommendation differed slightly from the Parking Study recommendation in specifying that meters should be added to unmetered sections of King Street and on side streets fronting commercial uses within the study area.

The Work Group expressed concern about the location of new metered spaces. Several group members felt strongly that the middle to upper sections of King Street, approximately the 700 to 1500 blocks, do not have enough available off-street options to heavily regulate the unmetered on-street parking spaces in those areas. Several members also suggested that the study area should be divided into sections and not treated homogeneously when determining where metered spaces should be established. However, it was generally agreed that because of the lack of off-street facilities in these areas, parking is in high demand and short supply. Metering would help to ensure that the needed short-term parking is available for users in this area.

At the culmination of the Work Group meetings, the group agreed on recommendations for adding meters in unmetered locations. The general process for determining whether meters should be added to an unmetered block should depend on adjacent land uses based on the ground floor usage. Meters should be added in unmetered blocks where the ground floor usage is fully commercial along the entire block. Meters should also be added in blocks that have both commercial and residential uses on the ground floor if the parking spaces show high activity or utilizations. Metering half or partial blocks should also be allowed. Lastly, the group agreed that the proximity and price of off-street parking facilities should be considered during the placement of additional meters to ensure that the metering does not incur a hardship on the immediate area.

### **Increasing the Metered Area in the Core Commercial District – Group Recommendations**

- **Add multispace meters in blocks that are fully commercial based on ground floor usage**
- **Add meters in commercial/residential combination blocks that are high activity or utilization. Allow for adding meters in half blocks in these combination blocks**
- **Consider proximity and price of off-street parking facilities as criteria for adding meters in unmetered locations**

### **Pay-by-Phone Technology**

Pay-by-phone technology allows parkers to pay meter fees through the use of a cell phone. Depending on the chosen vendor, users can set up an account online prior to usage or through their cell phone directly from the parking space. The user's account is linked to a credit card, and the user is charged a small fee – usually about 35 cents – for the use of the service. The user inputs either the provided parking space number or the vehicle's license plate number, and then chooses the desired amount of time to purchase. Some vendors will send an expiration reminder to the user's cell phone or prompt the user to extend the time (if allowed by the jurisdiction) as the end of the time period approaches. Enforcement of this technology requires Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs) to use a handheld device, such as a smart phone, and key in the parking space or license plate number of any vehicle that is parked at an expired meter. Once the number is logged into the web-based operating system, the PEO will be able to find whether the parked vehicle has paid the appropriate meter fees. This technology provides an alternative method of payment for the parking meter fees, and the system is fairly quick to implement, with full implementation occurring in less than six weeks.

### **Pay-by-Phone Technology – Group Discussion**

The group enjoyed the idea of the additional method of payment that pay-by-phone technology would offer. The pay-by-phone option would be a convenience for some users. At a low cost to the City and the ability to implement the technology with existing infrastructure, there was little disagreement that the implementation of the technology should be recommended. However, there was concern that use of a cell phone was not possible by persons with certain types of disabilities, and that charging a usage fee to the user may be considered unfair for persons with disabilities. There was also concern from the Police Department that enforcement of the technology would be inadequate given the existing resources within the department. This could lead to degradation in the parking enforcement ability throughout the Old Town area. For these reasons, the Police were not ready to support this recommendation at this time.

### **Pay-by-Phone Technology – Group Recommendations**

- **Implement pay-by-phone technology at metered spaces**

### ***“All May Park, All Must Pay”***

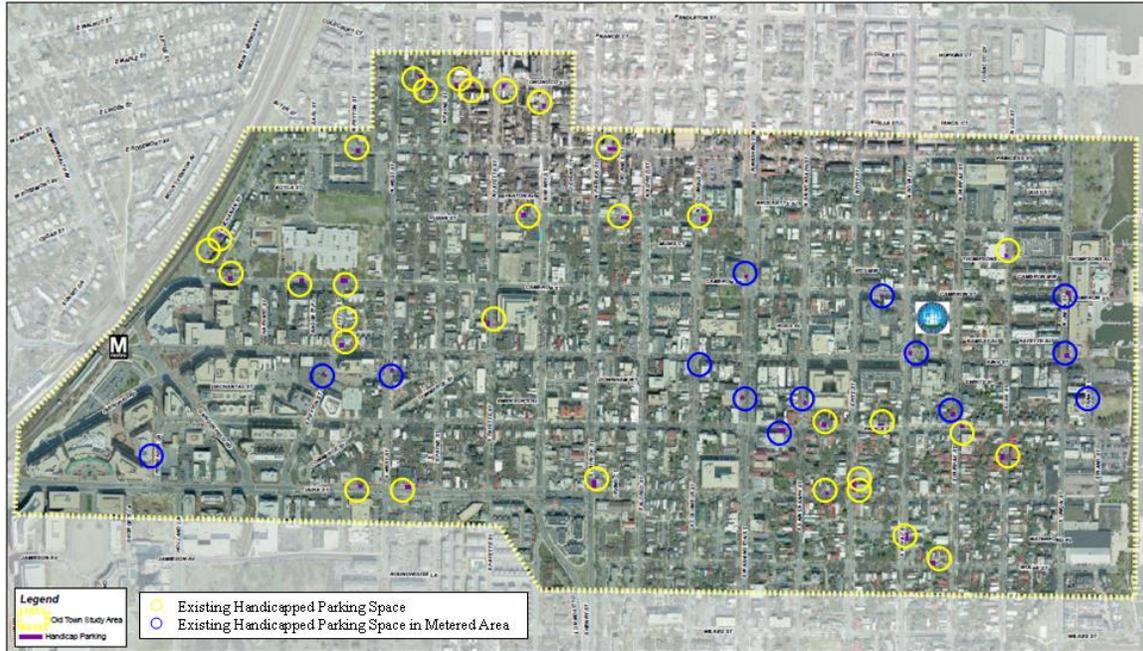
At this time, the City of Alexandria follows the Code of Virginia to regulate parking for vehicles with handicapped license plates or placards. The Code of Virginia exempts vehicles with proper handicapped designations from paying parking meter fees for up to four hours. The Code also allows up to four hours of parking in unmetered time-restricted areas. Lastly, the Code allows local jurisdictions to set aside these exemptions through local ordinance. Currently, vehicles in Alexandria with proper handicapped designations are exempt from meter fees for up to four hours. Those vehicles are also legally allowed to park for up to four hours in areas with lesser time limits.

The City is proposing an ordinance to require payment of meter fees for parked vehicles with proper handicapped designations, also known as “All May Park, All Must Pay”. The proposed ordinance continues to allow four hours of parking for disabled parkers with proper payment of the meter fees. In May 2010, City Council adopted the expected revenue from implementation of this policy into the fiscal year 2011 budget. A public hearing was held at a Traffic and Parking Board meeting in May 2010 to invite public comment on the issue. Several concerns were raised by the three speakers at the public hearing, including imposition of financial hardship on disabled individuals, proper availability and location of designated disabled spaces, the need for extended time of persons with disabilities to conduct business, and the location of the meter proximate to the parking space.

Currently, there are 14 handicapped spaces within the metered area of Old Town that are designated for disabled parkers only at all times, as shown in Figure 6. This represents 1.3% of the total metered spaces in the area. The spaces are distributed throughout the area, but are concentrated in the section east of South Alfred Street. There are also an additional three spaces within the metered area that are located in front of churches and are designated for disabled persons on Sundays only. Since the meters are not in effect on Sundays, these spaces would not be affected by the proposed policy.

Several neighboring jurisdictions have variations on the proposed policy. Arlington, Virginia instituted the “All May Park” policy in 1998. Disabled parkers are required to pay meter fees, but meters with twice the time limit are provided at designated disabled spaces. In Maryland, disabled parkers are exempt from meter fees only if the meter does not meet requirements set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In Bethany Beach, Delaware, disabled persons must pay all meter fees and in New York City, disabled persons are exempt from meter fees only with a special waiver, which is issued for those with physical limitations that prevent payment of the meter.

**Figure 6 – Handicapped Spaces in the Old Town Area**



**“All May Park, All Must Pay” – Group Discussion**

The Old Town Area Parking Study recommended that the City explore the possibility of adding meters to handicapped spaces. This would help to ensure turnover in the handicapped spaces and therefore properly manage these needed spaces that are intended for short-term access to a destination. Residents who testified at the Traffic and Parking Board Public Hearing indicated that handicapped designations were being used for either long-term commuter parking or for free or convenient parking by those not legally entitled to the use of the handicapped license plates or placards. A recent enforcement operation by Alexandria Police showed a high abuse rate by parkers of vehicles with handicapped designations. These abusers occupy the limited supply of designated disabled parking spaces and prevent the availability of these spaces to those who truly need them.

In reference to concerns that had arisen from the public hearing and discussions with the Alexandria Commission for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD), staff recommended that additional spaces be designated as disabled spaces throughout the Old Town area. Staff recommended that a minimum of 2% of all metered spaces be designated for use by the disabled, in accordance with percentages set forth by ADA requirements for off-street parking spaces (no handicapped parking spaces are required in the public right-of-way).

Staff is aware that additional time is necessary for persons with disabilities to conduct business, therefore staff also recommended that a four hour time limit be allowed at metered handicapped spaces, instead of the two hour limit at general use metered spaces. Staff also recommended placing individual parking meters at the designated handicapped spaces to ensure the meter’s proximity to the parking space and accessible curb ramps.

With approval of the proposed policy, staff recommended the exploration of further parking technologies to ease usage of the meters, including a credit card option in the individual meter located at handicapped spaces and investigating whether multispace meters could include a way for disabled persons to purchase four hours of parking time at non-designated spaces.

The Work Group expressed concern with the accessibility of parking meters and assurance that adequate spaces would be available. The group therefore recommended that the number of disabled spaces should start at 2% of all metered spaces in keeping with ADA guidelines for off-street facilities. It was noted that if those persons that are not legally entitled to use the spaces are discouraged by implementing meter fees and increasing enforcement (which is currently in progress), more disabled spaces would be available for use by disabled persons. It was also agreed that if the 2% of the metered spaces does not offer adequate availability to disabled persons, which can be shown with careful monitoring of the spaces after implementation of the policy, additional spaces could be designated. The group recommended that the designated handicapped spaces should be distributed throughout the Old Town area and not concentrated in one particular area.

The Work Group concurred with the other staff recommendations that a four hour time limit should be allowed for disabled users and technologies should be implemented to allow the same four hours at non-designated spaces. The group agreed that single-space meters should be placed at each designated handicapped parking space, and that the meters should accept credit cards to offer a choice of payment to users. This choice of payment options is also in consideration of the amount of coinage that would be necessary to purchase four hours of parking time with the existing coin-only single-space meters. Another of the Work Group's final recommendations on this topic was to implement the proposed policy only after the proper meter infrastructure is in place, thereby refraining from instilling further hardship on the disabled community.

The group was concerned with the possibility of forcing a financial hardship on disabled parkers. In response to this concern, the Work Group recommended that a financial waiver be issued to those disabled residents that fall below a specific income level. This waiver would exempt disabled residents from paying parking fees in metered parking areas. Because of the necessity for mobility impaired persons to have direct and proximate access to destinations, it would not be possible for those persons to park in the free parking areas located a few blocks from the core commercial and metered area. Non-disabled persons, regardless of income level, have the ability to park in a free area and walk to their destination. Therefore, the waiver would only be available to disabled residents below the specified income level.

The concern then arose that visitors with disabilities would not be able to participate in this waiver program. However, the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Center (ACVA) offers free parking for 24 hours to any visitor to the City. A free 24 hour parking proclamation can be obtained from the Alexandria Visitors Center located at Ramsay House at 221 King Street. Passes are valid at any metered space and are available to non-

Alexandria residents. The requester needs to provide the license plate number and state of issuance. The proclamation may also be renewed once for a total of 48 hours of free parking. This program could be used by disabled visitors to the City who are unable to pay meter fees.

One member asked the Work Group to consider adopting the recommendation to not change the current policy due to the difficulty of implementation and to ensure that further hardship was not impressed on the disabled community. The other present members of the group did not support this recommendation, and adopted the recommendations stated previously to address the presented technological and mobility issues and minimize negative impact on the disabled community.

### **“All May Park, All Must Pay” – Group Recommendations**

- **The number of designated handicapped spaces in the metered area should start at 2% of the total number of metered spaces**
- **Designated spaces should be distributed throughout the Old Town area**
- **Install four-hour meters at designated handicapped spaces**
- **Implement a program to issue meter fee waivers to low income disabled persons**
- **Implement technologies, such as in-vehicle parking devices, to allow four hours of meter time to be purchased by disabled persons at general use meters**
- **Install single-space parking meters at designated handicapped spaces that accept multiple payment options, such as credit cards and coins**
- **Implement “All May Park, All Must Pay” policy only after proper meter infrastructure is in place**

### ***Meters in Residential Areas***

Currently, the residential areas that flank the core commercial district are generally managed through a residential permit parking program, as shown in Figure 7. There are no metered parking spaces within the permit districts. Several permit parking districts are defined throughout the City, and parts of five different parking districts are included in the study area. The hours and days of restrictions in each parking district are posted on each block face that is regulated by the program. Residents are entitled to purchase permits for their vehicles and those of invited visitors, guests, contractors, or employees, which enable those vehicles to be exempt from posted time restrictions. Residents of certain developments within the permit parking districts are not entitled to purchase permits for their vehicles due to zoning conditions included in the development site plans. In those cases, vehicles must be kept in the provided off-street parking areas, such as garages, driveways, or parking lots. Vehicles that do not display permanent or temporary permits must follow the posted time restrictions, which limit parking to either two or three hours. The City Code prohibits vehicles from parking longer than the restricted time period during restricted hours more than once in each 24 hour period in each block. This means that after the two or three hour time limit has been reached, a parked vehicle

must be moved to a different block. The vehicle would not be able to park legally in that same block until the 24 hour period has ended.

Other than on weekday evenings, the residential areas east of Patrick Street that were included in the study area generally approached full occupancy during the study periods. This indicates that the parking areas are used by residential permit holders as well as business owners, employees, and visitors to the Old Town area. This has created conflict between residents and others, as residents expect to park near their home, business owners and employees would like to park near their workplace, and visitors would like to park near their destination. The Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group explored recommendations set forth in the Old Town Area Parking Study to help mitigate this parking conflict. These recommendations included reducing the time limits for non-permit holders in the residential areas and the addition of meters in the residential areas.

**Figure 7 – Residential Permit Parking Spaces in the Old Town area (designated in dark green)**



**Reduction of Time Limits in Residential Areas for Non-Permit Holders**

Currently, non-permit holders are allowed to park in the permit parking districts for a two or three hour time period, depending on the restrictions on the block face. Decreasing the allowable time period would increase the turnover in those areas, allowing residents an increased chance of finding a parking space close to home and reducing “cruising” for a space in this free area for other parkers. Shorter time limits also encourage long-term parkers, such as business owners, employees, and visitors, to park in appropriate longer-term facilities.

### **Reduction of Time Limits in Residential Areas for Non-Permit Holders – Group Discussion**

The Old Town Area Parking Study recommended that the City decrease the allowable parking duration in the residential permit parking districts for non-permit holders. Staff used more specificity in their recommendation to decrease the allowable parking duration in the residential permit districts within three blocks of King Street to one hour for non-permit holders.

The Work Group expressed concern that any reduction in allowable time limits for non-permit holders would have a negative impact on businesses and residents alike. Businesses depend on the two and three hour parking allowances to provide parking for customers and clients that are hesitant to pay parking fees and would otherwise not frequent their establishments. Residents depend on the two and three hour parking allowances to provide parking for guests or household help that would otherwise require a permit. Because of the need of the allowable time limits for guests of residents and the need of the parking spaces to stimulate area businesses, members of the Work Group determined that no changes should be made at this time to the allowable parking durations.

However, the group agreed that parking has become difficult for residents during peak hours, such as Friday nights and weekends. Discussion of implementation of a permit-only parking restriction during evening hours led to the recommendation that this option should be explored more fully in the future. Before implementation of such a restriction could be considered, parking utilization (including distinction between permit holders and non-permit holders) data should be collected and should be further studied. All other parking management measures should also be implemented prior to this study so that parking behavior can be properly measured. Specific land uses, such as churches and theaters, within the parking districts and their parking needs should also be carefully considered before developing a recommendation with respect to such restrictions. Also, because of the difficulty of visiting City Hall during normal business hours to obtain necessary permit for guests, the group recommended the implementation of an online permitting system for permit holders and their guests and visitors. Since this issue exists with the current parking restrictions, the group recommended that this permitting system be implemented regardless of additional changes to the parking management in the residential districts.

### **Reduction of Time Limits in Residential Areas for Non-Permit Holders – Group Recommendation**

- **Research evening permit only parking in residential areas adjoining the commercial district of Old Town**
- **Implement online permitting system for permit holders and their guests and visitors**

### **Adding Meters in Residential Permit Parking Districts**

Although current restrictions in the residential permit parking districts limit non-permit holders to short-term parking, it is evident that many parkers use these areas for longer-term parking. Enforcement officers use chalk to mark the tires of parked vehicles, and then ticket those that have not been moved within the allowed time period. Drivers can be seen throughout the day checking their vehicle tires for chalk marks, and leaving the vehicle in place if no chalk is seen on the tire. Drivers can also be observed moving their cars throughout the day to adjacent blocks throughout the study area. These drivers are most likely daily employees that are unable or unwilling to pay parking fees. Adding meters in these residential areas, from which permit holders would be exempt, encourages the long-term parkers to place their vehicles in an appropriate facility, or to move the vehicle further away to where parking time limits are unrestricted.

Metering the residential parking districts increases the overall utilization of parking spaces, which are limited assets. This enables non-permit holders to use the spaces, but also encourages needed turnover, effectively allowing the spaces to be of shared use by permit and non-permit holders. The increased turnover would allow residents to find a parking space close to home more easily, and it would reduce the number of drivers “cruising” for free parking.

However, if the parkers in this area are mainly those who are avoiding paying a parking fee, introduction of metered parking to this area would eliminate or push those users to farther spaces, and the meters would not be effective for their intended purpose. This would also make a return on investment difficult and lengthy, especially if multispace meters were installed (a previous Work Group recommendation established that only multispace meters should be installed wherever new installations were desired). Although Washington, D.C. has recently established a pilot program in which meters have been placed in residential areas, most neighboring jurisdictions have not yet introduced this parking management tool. In Old Town Alexandria, meters would also require the addition of hardware to historic residential areas, which would have an impact on the aesthetic quality of the streets as well as on the available pedestrian area.

### **Adding Meters in Residential Permit Parking Districts – Group Discussion**

The recommendation in the Old Town Area Parking Study in reference to this topic was to expand metered on-street parking to residential permit areas. Given the parking behaviors in the Old Town area, staff’s recommendation was to install multispace meters within the residential areas covered in the Old Town Area Parking Study.

Members of the Work Group expressed concern that the introduction of meters in the residential area would duplicate the issues that were brought up during the previous topic discussion related to reduction of time limits for non-permit holders. Meters in the residential areas would again raise issues with residents and their need for permits for guests and visitors. Also, there was concern that once permit holders were exempt from meters in residential areas, it would instill confusion with permit holders at meters in commercial or mixed commercial/residential blocks. Work Group members discussed the possibility of providing residents with a reusable permit for guests or a specific

number of online permits per year, once an online system was established. Due to possibility of confusion, concerns with the current permitting system, and the drawbacks mentioned in the overview of this topic, the group's final recommendation was to not install meters in the residential areas at this time.

### **Adding Meters in Residential Permit Parking Districts – Group Recommendations**

- **Do not install meters in residential permit parking districts**

### ***Use of Off-Street Parking Facilities***

Off-street parking facilities – parking garages and lots – contain almost half of the publicly available parking spaces in the Old Town area. Although a few of the sixteen garages and ten lots included in the parking study were effectively full during each of the study periods, most of the off-street facilities had adequate space left for parkers, even in peak periods.

Use of off-street parking facilities relieves the pressure of long-term use of the on-street spaces. Off-street parking facilities should provide longer-term parking for a lower price than on-street spaces offer. They are also normally located in less convenient locations than on-street spaces, and do not have time restrictions. Facilities usually have hourly and maximum rates; hourly rates tend to be higher than short-term on-street rates and maximum rates offer all day parking for less than it would cost on-street. Maximum rates and the elimination of time limits help to provide a sense of comfort for parkers that are unsure of their time needs in the area.

Because of their less convenient locations, parking facilities can be difficult to find for visitors unfamiliar to the area. This can be remedied through proper parking wayfinding, which directs unfamiliar visitors to parking facilities. Proper wayfinding also identifies which facilities are open to the public, helping to eliminate the confusion of whether a facility is public or private. In turn, this reduces “cruising” by parkers that are unsure of parking facilities’ location or availability.

There exist many issues that contribute to the underutilization of off-street parking facilities in the Old Town area. The area lacks the proper parking wayfinding to assist unfamiliar visitors to appropriate parking facilities. Facilities throughout the Old Town area have differing hours of operation and inconsistent hourly and maximum rates. This establishes confusion and anxiety for users, who opt to improperly use on-street parking instead. The low meter rate that was in effect at the time of the parking study made long-term on-street parking more economical than paying the rates in most of the off-street facilities.

Another way to maximize usage of off-street parking facilities is through valet parking programs. Valet parking provides a convenience to users with the provision of a set location for vehicle drop-off and pick-up, preferred proximity to destinations, a known

set price for parking, and the absence of parking time restrictions. Valet parking can target underutilized spaces in facilities and increase the parking capacity in limited areas. The use of valet parking also reduces “cruising” for a parking space, as the drop-off location is always available through proper management.

### **Use of Off-Street Parking Facilities – Group Discussion**

To improve usage of the off-street facilities, the Old Town Area Parking Study recommends implementation of an area-wide parking wayfinding program to include the branding of publicly accessible parking facilities in a consistent manner. The parking study also recommends varying off-street parking rates according to the facility’s location and use and increasing the on-street meter rates. Since the release of the parking study, the City has addressed the study recommendations to raise the on-street meter rates and to implement a parking wayfinding program, as shown in Appendix A. Another recommendation is to work with parking garage owners and operators to develop and implement a consistent and predictable system-wide parking rate structure and hours of operation, and to clearly communicate this information to the public. Finally, the study recommended working with garage operators and owners to implement shared parking strategies.

Staff agreed with these recommendations and reiterated the intention of the City to work with facility owners and operators to address inconsistencies in operational hours and rates. Staff also recommended the introduction of a public valet parking program for use by visitors to Old Town. This valet parking program would use City-owned lots that are currently under capacity and would be located around middle King Street where there are fewer parking garages.

The use of off-street facilities is important for the possibility of future development in the Old Town area, such as is included in the proposed Waterfront Concept Plan. The attraction of an increased number of visitors to the area, some of whom would travel by vehicle, relies on the ability to fully utilize the existing capacity of parking facilities. This can be done through proper parking management and the use of existing facilities.

The group discussed whether the City-owned facilities should increase market rates in the evenings and on weekends, when parking is offered at a significantly lower rate than at other parking facilities. The group agreed that raising the City parking rates to approach other facilities’ rates would be contrary to the overall parking management plan of offering lesser rates at off-street facilities. There was also a suggestion to implement a validation program, such as was done previously through the ParkAlexandria program, to encourage the use of garages, but this was determined to be too difficult for the City to be involved in and manage at this time.

The Work Group agreed that off-street facilities are underutilized in large part by the difficulty in locating garages, inconsistent hours and rates, and lack of publicly available parking information. The group also suggested that safety concerns keep some users from parking in lots and garages. The approved wayfinding program that is currently in progress will address location issues, but to address the other issues, the group’s final

recommendations were: to improve City-owned parking lots by improving lighting, cleanliness, markings, and signs, and to accept multiple forms of payment in the City-owned facilities to ease usage; to develop a brochure in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, AVCA, and other involved parties in order to distribute parking information; to improve parking information on the City website; and to work with private garages to extend hours where necessary.

The group reacted favorably to the idea of a public valet parking program, both for its offered convenience for users and in maximizing the capacity of the parking system. Mr. Andrew Blair, a Work Group member and President and CEO of Colonial Parking, brought expertise to the discussion and informed the group that rarely can a valet parking program be profitable, especially in cases such as this one where it may be beneficial to the program to minimize fees to the user. Members of the group voiced concern with where funds for such a program might be generated. The group discussed the many decisions that would be needed for implementation of such a program, including locations for valet parking operations, areas best served by valet, and facilities that would benefit from involvement in a valet program. The group felt that the valet services would be most convenient and show greatest utilization if the drop-off and pick-up point was located directly on King Street. The group agreed that user fees could be kept competitive and the City would maximize funding for such a program by using existing capacity in City-owned lots for valet parking. It would also be ideal to keep drop-off and pick-up operations in City-owned facilities that are adjacent and entered from King Street. The group recommended that further measures be explored towards implementation of a public valet parking program.

#### **Use of Off-Street Parking Facilities – Group Recommendations**

- **Improve City-owned parking facilities by improving lighting, cleanliness, pavement markings, and signs, and accepting multiple forms of payment**
- **Develop a brochure in partnership with Chamber of Commerce, ACVA, and other involved parties for distribution to users**
- **Improve parking information on the City website**
- **Work with private garage owners and operators to extend hours of operations and offer consistent rates**
- **Implement a public valet parking program using City-owned facilities for operations**

#### ***Enforcement***

Enforcement is a key factor in parking management. Any parking management measures that are implemented must be properly enforced to be successful. For this reason, the Alexandria Police Department was invited to the Work Group meetings to offer opinions and technical suggestions relating to each of the topic discussions. The Police representatives described current enforcement techniques, methodology, and equipment. They analyzed the ability of the Police Department to enforce suggested recommendations with the current available resources and discussed the additional

resources, if any, that would be needed for adequate enforcement of suggested recommendations.

The metered spaces are currently enforced by Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs) in vehicles. Each single-space meter has a blinking red light that indicates when the meter has not been paid or has expired, which can be seen from a passing PEO vehicle. If a space is occupied by a parked car and the meter is blinking, the PEO issues a ticket to the vehicle. Replacement of the single-space meters with multispace pay-and-display meters will require the PEOs to inspect the parking meter receipt on the dashboard of each parked vehicle to determine whether the vehicle is in violation, which will necessitate the PEOs to patrol on foot. This will demand a greater amount of time from the PEOs for enforcement of the metered spaces, and thus, the Police Department would need additional resources to maintain the current level of enforcement.

Currently, PEOs enforce non-metered time restricted areas through the common practice of chalking tires. A PEO marks the tires of a parked vehicle with a piece of chalk, then returns at the end of the allowed time period to see if the vehicle has been moved. Vehicles that show the chalk mark longer than the time restrictions allow are ticketed. The Police are currently researching the use of camera technologies to enforce time restrictions in a much quicker and more efficient manner than the Department's current practice of chalking tires. This would be useful to allow greater reallocation of personnel to the metered areas.

Pay-by-phone technology presents the greatest hurdle for PEOs. PEOs enforcing the metered zones would have to check the status of each parked vehicle that does not have a meter receipt displayed or displays an expired meter receipt. With current equipment, this would require the PEO to enter the license plate number of each parked vehicle into a handheld device to check whether the vehicle is in violation. This time-consuming practice would be made more difficult in cold weather, when gloves would further inhibit entry of license plate numbers into such devices. Another option for enforcement would be to purchase license plate reader (LPR) devices to be able to more quickly identify the status of the parked vehicles. However, this equipment can be expensive as well as cumbersome, which can be difficult for on-foot PEOs to carry. Even with LPR devices, the additional check for proper meter payment would increase the time needed for enforcement of the metered spaces. Pay-by-phone technology may eventually be incorporated into the aforementioned technologies used for enforcement of time restricted parking areas, but at this time, it would be a stand-alone technology.

The additional recommendations set forth by the group would not greatly affect the current Police resources and would be able to be properly enforced if implemented. This includes the "All May Park, All Must Pay" policy, extension of meter hours, expansion of the metered area, and establishment of permit only parking areas. However, acquisition of the previously described technologies would assist in ensuring efficient enforcement of all of the recommendations.

## **CONCLUSION**

After discussing the Old Town Area Parking Study recommendations as directed by City Council, the Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group established a comprehensive chart of final recommendations, shown in Appendix B, to improve parking management in the Old Town area. These recommendations are intended to work cohesively to improve the utilization of the existing parking capacity. By implementation of these strategies, the City can work towards improving parking operations in the Old Town area.

## **Appendix A – Recent Council and Commission Actions Relating to Parking Management**

On June 12, 2010, City Council passed an ordinance to increase meter rates from a fee of \$1.00 per hour to \$1.75 per hour in all metered spaces within the City. The anticipated revenue was reflected in the budget. The recommendation for a meter rate increase was set forth in the Old Town Area Parking Study for the purpose of properly managing the on-street parking spaces in the Old Town area. The meter rate increase took effect on July 1, 2010.

On September 7, 2010, the Planning Commission approved a staff proposal for wayfinding signage, which included parking wayfinding in its scope. City Council included funding for the parking wayfinding in the approved budget for fiscal year 2011. The proposal for manufacturing and installing the wayfinding signage is currently being put out to bid, with installation of the parking wayfinding projected to be complete in early winter 2011.

On September 14, 2010, staff presented City Council with a request to reallocate funding to replace the 1,039 single-space meters in the Old Town area with 125 multispace meters. Based on the presentation of benefits and disadvantages of multispace meters, the recommendations of the Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group, and the desire to assist businesses with an alternative to the existing coin-only operated meters, the City Council members present at the September 14 meeting unanimously approved the reallocation of \$1,250,000 for this purpose. It is estimated that the new multispace meters will be installed and operational by April 2011.

### ***Addendum – May 2011***

#### **Additional Actions, Ordinances, and City Council Docket Items**

October 12, 2011 – City Council Work Session on the Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group recommendations.

November 9, 2010 – Docket Item #20: Ordinance to change parking meter rates at coin operated parking meters in the City. Passed by Council.

November 9, 2010 – Docket Item #21: Ordinance to require holders of handicapped license plates or placards to pay for parking in metered zones. Deferred by Council.

March 3, 2011 – Docket Item #22: Consideration of modifications to the City's parking policy for persons with disabilities. Approved by Council.

April 12, 2011 – Docket Item #25: Resolution to establish meter hours in Meter Zones One and Two in Old Town. Passed by Council.

Appendix B – Old Town Area Parking Study Work Group Chart of Final Recommendations

Extension of meter hours	Meters with shorter maximum allowable times	Time limits in residential neighborhoods for non-permit holders	Meters in residential neighborhoods	Variable Parking Rates	Multispace Meters	Pay-by-Phone
<b>Extend meter hours until 10pm on existing operational days.</b>	Place 1 or 2 30-min meters per block.	<b>Implement online permitting system for permit holders and their guests and visitors.</b>	Install parking meters in residential neighborhoods and give residents one reusable hang tag/pass for visitors.	<b>Do not implement.</b>	<b>Install Multispace Pay and Display meters for new meter installations.</b>	<b>Implement Pay-by-phone technology at metered spaces.</b>
Extend meter hours until 10pm and include Sundays and holidays.	Place 1 or 2 1-hr meters per block.	Implement residential/permit parking during evening hours (i.e. 6pm-6am)**. <b>Research further to revisit in future.</b>	Install parking meters in residential neighborhoods and give residents (X) online permits per year for visitors.		<b>Replace existing single-space individual meter heads with multispace meters.</b>	Do not implement pay-by-phone technology.
Do not change.	Place 1-hr meters on King St and 2-hr meters on side streets	Do not change.	<b>Do not change.</b>		Do not change.	
	<b>Do not change.</b>					

**Final work group recommendations are in bolded text.**

\* No options shall impact placement of disabled spaces.

\*\* To be explored 6 months after other measures are implemented, parking utilization is studied (including permit vs non-permit), and public input is gathered.

Disabled pay to park policy "All May Park, All Must Pay"	Addition of meters in unmetered commercial areas	Parking Garages/Lots	Valet Parking
<b>No. of disabled spaces should start at 2% of all metered spaces. Spaces should be distributed throughout the Old Town Area.</b>	<b>Add multispace meters in blocks that are fully commercial (based on ground floor usage).</b>	<b>Improve City-owned parking lots: lighting, cleanliness, markings, signs, and accept multiple forms of payment.</b>	<b>Use City-owned lots for valet parking.</b>
<b>Place 4-hr meters at designated disabled spaces.</b>	Add meters only in blocks that are fully commercial, except between 700 and 1500 blocks of King and side streets in that section.	Implement validation program to encourage use of garages, but improved program w/ lessons learned from Park Alexandria.	Use spaces on King St for valet parking.
<b>Implement issuance of waivers to allow disabled not to pay meter fees based on income.</b>	<b>Add meters in combination blocks that are high activity/utilization. Allow for 1/2 blocks.</b>	City-owned facilities should charge market rates at night.	Explore funding for valet parking.
<b>Implement technologies to allow 4-hr max time for disabled users at non-designated spaces such as in-vehicle parking devices.</b>	<b>Consider proximity and price of off-street parking facilities as criteria for adding meters in unmetered locations.</b>	<b>Develop brochure for users in partnership with others (CoC, AVCA, etc.) to distribute parking information.</b>	Do not have City operated valet.
<b>Install parking meters at handicapped spaces that accept credit cards.</b>	Divide study area into sections and do not treat area homogenously.	<b>Improve parking information on City website.</b>	
<b>Implement policy only after proper meter infrastructure is in place.</b>	Do not change.	<b>Work with private garages to extend hours.</b>	
Do not change.		Do not change.	

**Final work group recommendations are in bolded text.**

\* No options shall impact placement of disabled spaces.